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Medicine Practices of the North-eastern Algonquians

By

FRANK G. SPECK

Extract from

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MEDICINE PRACTICES OF THE NORTHEASTERN ALGONQUIANS

By Frank G. Speck

TO present some material in a somewhat neglected branch of ethnology I offer the following notes on the use of herb medicines among several representative northeastern Algonquian tribes, namely, the Montagnais of the north coast of the Gulf of St Lawrence and the lower St Lawrence river; the Penobscot, typical of the Wabanaki group of northern New England and the maritime provinces of Canada; and the Mohegan of southern New England.

Native pharmacopeia from different parts of North America shows that the therapeutic qualities of herbs are recognized quite generally among the Indians. Among the eastern tribes, however, methods of treatment of disease, entirely independent of shamanism, are very characteristic, and these are to be discussed in this paper.

While I am not in a position to discuss the actual pathological values of the medicinal agents presented in the lists, I feel sure that the herb remedies of the tribes of the northeast will be found to show approximately the same proportion of actually beneficial to ineffective, or even contrary acting nostrums, as in the case of the Cherokee, whose medicines have been discussed by Mooney.[1]

Aside from the physical properties of the medicines, however, certain ethnological indications, based on an analysis of the concepts simply as folklore elements, can be observed. In the first place, the widespread use of herbs as medicines apart from the practice of magic, in eastern America, and certain similarities in the properties attributed to the herbs, show that, while the details of practice and belief may have changed in the course of time and become somewhat specialized in different tribes of the same group, the practical use of herbs is a fundamentally primitive idea that has survived in this region devoid of the complexities of ritual. It seems to me that a ritual associated with the practice of herb medicines denotes a higher stage in the development of folklore thought. Among the ethnic groups south and west of the area under discussion, magical practices with ritual and mythical associations are the rule in curing disease. In the northeast the farther we go from the sphere of outside influence, that is, the nearer to the Atlantic coast, the more prominent is the quasi-practical use of herbs without ritual. To illustrate, the Penobscot seem to have more mythical associations accompanying the cures than the other members of the Wabanaki group, possibly through being nearer to Iroquois influence.[2] Hence two things seem naturally

[1] Mooney (Sacred Formulas of the Cherokee, p. 328). Discussing the properties of twenty plants (listed with their values in the *United States Dispensatory*) from the Cherokee, Mr Mooney finds seven correctly used by the Indians, three uncertain, seven having no assigned therapeutic qualities in the *Dispensatory*, and five used for the wrong purposes.

The titles of works referred to are listed under the authors' names at the end of the paper.

[2] The Penobscot possibly show evidence of Iroquois contact borrowing more than do their eastern neighbors.

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inferable: (1) that the simple herbalism as it exists among the northeastern tribes is a more elementary institution than herbalism accompanied by or subordinated to magic and ritual; and (2) that the area in which the former has survived as characteristic is a more conservative and primitive one. This conclusion corresponds with the other indications of the northeastern Algonquian field, showing that in the comparatively isolated northeast the early simple culture of the stock has been retained longer than in the central Algonquian region where higher cultures from the south and the west have been encountered.

The remedies consist, as can be seen, mostly of single herbs. The few mixed ingredients may, I think, be regarded as being of late origin. The simple idea that the use of each herb has a direct effect on the system is the fundamental one to these people. Where it is thought that a certain pain or disorder will be counteracted by one remedy, a double or complex disorder may be treated by simply combining the remedy for each trouble into a single medicine so that the two or more agents may work at the same time.

An examination of the remedy names themselves shows that they are primarily descriptive rather than figurative or symbolical. Among the tribes of the northeastern group, the only herbs having myth associations that I have so far encountered are those from the Penobscot, to be given shortly. Under the conditions of cultural simplicity which prevail in this region, it is no wonder that group ritual and mythical associations are almost entirely lacking. Just as in European lore, animals names are associated with plants. We find them used here as designations where animals are thought to eat them. So we have native names derived from bear, moose, deer, muskrat, snake, eel, whippoorwill, partridge, duck, beaver, squirrel, ant, turkey, rabbit, and weasel, from the belief that they eat the plant or fruit.

While the Indians are acquainted with the majority of native plant genera, they do not identify the smaller forms with care, even from an Indian point of view. We observe, for instance, the same name for several entirely different things in various cases. In a few instances, on the other hand, species are distinguished and different attributes are assigned to each.

From an external point of view the remedies are essentially practical; the Indians have no theories for them and no magical rites enliven their preparation or application. As to origin it is generally supposed that they were discovered by accident, or more often through deliberate experimentation in ancient times. One method of test, at least, which may illustrate how the herb values are ascertained, is by taste. For example, an herb which produces an astringent effect when put in the mouth is thought to do the same to the stomach when taken inwardly. Hence should it be imagined that this effect, through the perception of taste, would bring relief in any way, the application of the herb naturally becomes an established practice in at least one case, and later it develops into a general remedy should the experiment prove generally helpful. The Indians are accustomed to submit many substances to the test of taste to judge of their qualities. I am, moreover, quite sure that some of these remedies are individual. There are, as might be expected, some women of experience with the cure-alls who have more faith in the efficacy of certain herbs than others. In the whole area women are primarily the medicators, since theirs is the province of minor agriculture and the cooking fire. Suggestive, indeed, is the Montagnais

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specific name of "pot herb" applied to blue flag and ferns. It seems as though the age of experimentation indicates itself in the combined medicinal and gustatory functions of such plants.

The process, then, by which a tribal herbology develops from individual nostrums is easily conceived. Consequently, whatever similarities may prevail in practice in widely separated regions need not necessarily indicate diffusion, unless a similarity in name, and in some details of knowledge about the plant or its properties, should occur as well. In comparing the remedies, their names and uses, in two separate regions of the area,—among the Montagnais north of the St Lawrence and the Penobscot south of it,—it strikes me that remarkably few close similarities are to be noted, even though the flora of both districts is fairly alike.[1] As the same dissimilarity characterizes the lists from two tribes south of the St Lawrence,—Penobscot with related Wabanaki divisions, and Mohegan,—we are led to infer that the special herbalisms are distinctly matters of local tribal knowledge, rather than group knowledge, and hence more individual and perhaps more modern in content than if they were fundamentally uniform throughout the tribes of a wide uniform floral zone.

Let us, however, undertake to analyze the concepts underlying the cures as folklore phenomena. While the theory of sympathetic influence ("like influencing like") is not outwardly prominent in this region, we can nevertheless feel that certain psychological relationships exist between the disease to be treated and either the appearance, the imaginary quality, smell, taste, or even the name of the herb used in the treatment. I think the following cases, taken from the material to be presented, will illustrate this point.

The root of sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*), "muskrat root" (Penobscot and Nanticoke), as a cure for cholera is based on the belief that, serving as the diet of the muskrat and causing its excrements to be meager, the root will have the same effect on man.

The use of spruce-gum and balsam sap (Penobscot), outside of their obvious virtues, as applications for scabs, sores, abscesses, and the like, has an analogy in the belief concerning Pukdji'nskwes'u, a mythical being, from whose scabs and sores the gum and sap on the conifers orginated.

Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*) as a cure for ulcers is founded on its astringent quality, and the same evidently explains the similar use for golden thread (*Coptis trifolia*), Prince's pine (*Chimaphila umbellata*), and acorns of the white oak, among the Penobscot.

There is possibly an analogy between the name of "moose wood" (Penobscot) (*Acer pennsylvanicum*) and the idea that it is good for trouble with the limbs.[2] The analogy in both the name and form of ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*), in Penobscot "man root", with the idea of increasing fertility in women is noticeable. The same applies to the use of worm-root (*Apocynum cannabium*) for curing worm troubles, and snake-root (*Aristolchia serpentaria*) for fits ("contortions"). The uses of all these are determined from their appearance.

The use of elm bark for bleeding lungs (Penobscot) comes from the idea

[1] Comparison of the listed Montagnais and Penobscot remedies shows only one or two close correspondences and three or four broader ones; Penobscot and Mohegan about thirteen.

[2] This analogy exists between the deer and rheumatism of the limbs among the Yuchi and Cherokee.

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that the slippery quality of the medicine will "smooth down" the irritated throat and lungs.

The color of blood-root (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) (Penobscot and Mohegan) suggests its use to prevent bleeding. The same applies to the use of red beads (Penobscot and Nanticoke). The idea of scarification for pain is based on the principle of counter-irritant effect and also on the idea of making an exit for the pain.

Mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*), in Montagnais "bear berries", as appetizers, derive their use from the fattening effect they have on bears, who are so fond of them. Their red color, moreover, suggests their quality as a blood purifier.

Fever and weakness are usually associated with each other (Montagnais), consequently the weak running ground plants, *Lycopodia* and *Taxus minor*, are sought for as antipyretics. Pungent leaves of the buttercup, *Ranunculus acris* (Montagnais), when inhaled, produce local inflammation and sneezing which provides a "vent" for the pent-up feeling of a headache.

The fronds of brake (*Pteris* sp.) (Montagnais), from the stiffness of the leaf-stalks, come to be thought of for weak babies and for old people. And again the analogy in name, *wabu'cəɣəci*,[1] "rabbit roots" (Montagnais), sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicalis*), and *abocabci''t*, "weakness," may be noted.

The sympathetic association shows plainly in the Mohegan practice of using the bark of elder (*Sambucus canadensis*) obtained by scraping it upward from the stem for use as an emetic and downward for use as a physic.[2] It is also possible that the fuzzy nature of the leaves of mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), which are smoked by both the Penobscot and the Mohegan for curing asthma, suggested relief from the smothery obstruction of the affliction. Evidently the toxic phenomenon in the dentition of certain serpents suggested the biting of the body of a live snake among the Mohegan and the Iroquois as a means of preventing and relieving dental troubles.

This is a feature of no little importance in a study of this kind, because it throws light on one of the elementary processes by which the primitive pharmacological experimenters developed their lore by seeking resemblances of some sort between the objective and the means.[3] In itself the concept seems to be a very simple and hence a primitive one. And, moreover, since it is manifested separately and in the same weak degree among all the northeastern tribes, the impression is strengthened that the simple characteristic phase of the concept

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[1] The characters in the native terms requiring explanation are: Penobscot, ɑ, vowel similar to *u* in English *but*; ə short obscure vowel; ǫ, ɑ̨, etc., nasalized vowels; a', i', lengthened vowels; ', aspiration following sound, there being nothing abnormal from the ordinary values of other vowels and consonants. Montagnais, *c*, like English *sh*; *j*, sonant palatal like French *j*; *s*, tip of tongue deflected to lower alveolar dental; *q*, posterior palatal voiceless stop; ɣ, velar sonant.

[2] Mr J. O. Warfield obtained the same information from the Pamunkey of Virginia.

[3] Mooney holds the same view for the Cherokee medicines, while the writer discusses Creek and Yuchi material (Creek and Yuchi Ceremonial Songs, pp. 212-13) based on a similar concept. Mooney (p. 329) says: "Cherokee medicine is an empiric development of the fetich idea." Also (p. 322): "The various herbs were regarded as fetiches and were selected from some fancied connection with the disease animal." Animals, according to Cherokee and Muskogian doctrine, are conceived of as the causative agents of disease.

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in this region is the survival, uninvolved with ritual or mythical associations, of a nascent stage in the growth of folk-medicine.

PENOBSCOT MEDICINE PRACTICES

An extensive pharmacopeia, to which nearly every plant of the soil contributes a share, is the inheritance from generations of experimenting ancestors cherished by the older people among the Penobscot. The use of the herbs and the medicine applications are essentially practical, without conjuration or jugglery. Some of the ideas concerning their origin, and no doubt some of the cure-alls themselves, possess only an imaginary value, yet in the list of agents will be found a number whose actual properties the Indians have correctly learned. The knowledge of plants and trees among both young and old, the ability to identify them from parts, and acquaintance with their properties, are quite remarkable. The fact that my list has been assembled from many different persons leads me to think that an almost unexhaustible fund of knowledge exists on the subject. The cures are not the restricted property of any persons, nor, so far as I could learn, were they the secret possessions of shamans. They represent the current, ever-ready folk-cures of the tribe open to the acquisition of all.[1] There are, of course, some old women who, from long experience in treating the ills of their children and grandchildren, come to be regarded as expert herbalists. Besides these are several men who have made a sort of professional practice of treating diseases, receiving money for their remedies. It is believed, incidentally, that the seventh son of a family is gifted with a knowledge of medicines and healing powers. The advantage of friendship with several of these self-appointed practitioners resulted in securing some highly-valued secret concoctions on the payment of a small fee. It seems that some of the cures are kept secret by their owners as a kind of monopoly and either sold or handed down by them to posterity. A person who independently poses as an herb-doctor, without necessarily being a shaman (or *məde'olinu*), is known as *nutsi'* '*pi'ləwet*, one who cures with "medicines". The herb cures are *nəbi''zun*, "medicine" (a derivative from "water", "liquid").

The origin of the various herb medicines in general is accounted for in the story of *Gwelə'b'hot*, "Turn Over", known as the great mythical chief. In this myth a child is miraculously born to a Penobscot girl who is held as a captive among the Mohawk. This child metamorphoses from a rare medicinal root which she found and hid in her bosom. In the rather long account of her adventures she escapes from the Mohawk and returns home, leaving her medicine child behind her. The infant is soon discovered eating the livers of children in the Mohawk village, and promises to desist only on condition that he be created their chief. The agreement is made and the infant becomes the guardian of medicines, lying on one side continually. When he is rolled over, the various

[1] Compare the above with what Hrdlička says regarding the tribes of the Southwest: "Independent of and not interfering with supernatural means of healing, there is much simple general knowledge of actual remedies. There are numerous plants and modes of treatment, the use and utility of which are known to all in a given locality. . . The use of such means is empirical and by no means always effectual; yet some are of service, and the mode of their employment is occasionally quite rational. Separate tribes and even portions of one tribe use different herbs and means; a few plants, however, as well as various physical practices are apparently known over a wide territory. . . Many of the practices and remedies are undoubtedly original with the Indians, and some are quite ancient." (Hrdlička, p. 231.)

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herbs are found beneath him, and any Indians who go to visit him, in his supernatural realm in the north, may obtain the gift of healing and the knowledge of the herbs by asking for them and rolling him over on his other side. Concerned with the *Gwelə'b'hot* story are also stories describing the fates of different suppliants who have visited him for gifts.

Those who acquired the secret cures held the notion that if they disclosed them too freely the herbs would lose their potency. The native doctor, who confided in me quite freely, claimed to be free from superstition, though his fancy led him to collect a fee for all the valuable disclosures. He possessed a talisman consisting of a disc-shaped stone, several inches in diameter, with a hole near the margin by which it was attached to a string to be worn about the neck. (A similar charm is common among the Micmac-Montagnais of Newfoundland.) This object he preserved as a part of his working stock, as it brought him good luck. Besides quantities of dried plants, roots, leaves, and bark, the medicine-maker's outfit often includes a small wooden mortar, eight inches or so in height, and a pestle, with which to mangle his nostrums. I have also seen people pound up ingredients on a stump in or near camp, using an extemporized wooden maul as a pestle.

With some families the concoction of remedies for some complaint or other is almost a continuous performance. For instance, while staying at the upper village near Lincoln, Me., I found my host complaining of a slight cough for which he was taking drafts of steeped sweet-flag and sarsaparilla-root prepared by his wife at intervals of about half an hour, in which I was invited to join him. Several cupfuls of the hot liquid were consumed by us whenever the notion seized my friend. Under such circumstances, especially in spring, different medicines became almost beverages. Tied to the rafters of the ceiling or hanging near the stove to dry, strings or bundles of roots, bark, and plants may be seen in nearly every house.

The idea of an essentially practical popular herbalism dissociated from shamanistic ritual or magic is shared by many other eastern tribes, particularly the Algonquians, although only a few actual published lists from the eastern tribes are available. The western area is better represented. Hoffman [1] gives some Ojibwa material, Mooney some Cherokee,[2] Hunter some Osage, Kansas, Shawnee, and Pawnee,[3] Bushnell some Choctaw,[4] while the writer has presented a list from the Creeks, some of which also carry a ritual.[5] Kroeber[6] offers a Gros Ventre list, and Lowie[7] a Shoshone. Mr F. W. Waugh[8] is preparing an important study of Iroquois medicines, and Mr Warfield[9] a Pamunkey list. Hagar[10] presents some Micmac materia medica and a discussion of magic.

In Penobscot, sickness is called *akwa'malsu'wɔgan;* pain is *be'dak'wgemals* (*-ak'w*, 'sick', *amals* 'state of feeling').

The herb cures will be listed first.

Sweet flag (*Iris versicolor*), *muskwe's'uwesk*, "muskrat root", is steeped for

Acorus calamus

[1] Hoffman, pp. 197-201.
[2] Mooney, pp. 324-27.
[3] Hunter, pp. 368-95.
[4] Bushnell, pp. 23-24.
[5] Speck, pp. 124-33.
[6] Kroeber, pp. 224-27.
[7] Lowie, pp. 227-28.
[8] To appear in the Anthropological series of the Geological Survey of Canada.
[9] J. O. Warfield, Pamunkey manuscript.
[10] Hagar, pp. 174-76.

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cholera. This is perhaps the most important herb in Penobscot pharmacology, and knowledge of it was imparted to a man by the muskrat spirit in a dream.[1] Sections of the dried root are cut up, strung together, and hung up for preservation in nearly every house.

Alder (*Alnus* sp.), *wudo"pi*; bark boiled in water stops cramps and retching.

Sweet fern (*Myrica asplenifolia*), *enik‘wsi·mu'zi·*, "ant wood"; leaves steeped and rubbed on the skin will cure the effects of poison ivy. It gets its name from its abundance in dry fields where ant-hills are common.

Prince's pine (*Chimaphila umbellata*), *tcilkase'sowe'i·gil*, "things for scorching," is steeped and applied to blisters.

Willow bark (*Salix* sp.), *kanuze's·u*, steeped, is drunk in quantities for colds.

The ground pine (*Lycopodium dendroideum*), *awe's·us pud·i·'n*, "bear paw", is thought to have some medicinal value.

Cedar (*Arbor vitæ*), *kaŋksku'zi*, "brittle wood"; leaves are made into a poultice for swollen hands or feet.

Spruce-gum (*Picea* sp.), *ka'wadegwi·k‘w*, "rough wood (spruce) sap", in a soft state, or else pine pitch, is used as a poultice on boils and abscesses. Spruce-gum is chewed extensively by the Indians as a pastime.

Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), *bopu'k‘whawe‘k‘w*, "fir sap", is smeared over burns, sores, and cuts as a healer.

Fungus (*Polyporus* or *Dædalea*), *abila'dwan*, in some vague way is considered good for female troubles. I could not learn much about it.

Dock root (*Arctium minus*), *skadebweswe wa‘djabak*, "spread-out-flat root"; a piece about six inches long is mashed and heated as a poultice for boils and absceses.

Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), *kwədaŋ'gani·'nəbi·‘zun*, "throat medicine"; root or bark is pounded to a mash and applied to ulcerated gums. It is also good for sore throat.[2]

Acorns of the white oak (*Quercus alba*) are eaten to induce thirst since it is thought beneficial to drink plenty of water.

Squaw bush (*Salix lucida*), *nespi·pa'mk‘w*, "mixture"; bark is smoked to relieve asthma.

Ground hemlock (*Taxus minor*), *daga'ki·mo‘zi·ak*, "ground trees"; twigs are steeped to make a kind of tea which is not only beneficial for colds but serves also as a beverage.

Golden thread (*Coptis trifolia*), *wi·saŋke'skil*, "yellow stems"; stems are chewed to allay canker or sores on the gums or in the mouth. It is good for mouths irritated by too much tobacco smoking.

Partridge berry (*Mitchella repens*), *skuksi·'minal*, "snake berries";[3] plants are a somewhat non-specific material to be steeped.

Mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*), *mi·na‘kwi·'muzi·*, "bunched berry tree", furnishes a medicine used as an emetic.

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[1] An abstract of the myth is as follows: A plague of sickness was sweeping the Indians away. There was no one to cure the people. One night a man was visited by a Muskrat in a dream. The Muskrat told him that he was a root and where to find him. The man awoke, sought the muskrat root, made a medicine of it, and cured the people of the plague.

[2] The Poosepatuck (Uncachogue) Indians of Long Island told me that the leaves of bayberry (*Myrica carolinensis*) are good for toothache.

[3] Malecite, *at‘hosə'swi·mi·nal*, "snake berries."

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Poplar (*Populus tremuloides*), *wus·aga"k'"*, "bitter wood"; bark is steeped for colds; it produces a sweat. (Also a Malecite remedy.)

The plant of lady's slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*), *pi·wi·djaba'kek'"sgil*, "many fine roots", is steeped as a medicine for nervousness.

A mash made of the leaves of cow lily (*Nymphæa advena*), *ktcipske"l·e*, "big one side (flower)", or water lily (*Castalia odorata*), *pske'te'sis*, "little one side", is used for swellings of the limbs.

An important Malecite medicine is what appears to be maiden-hair fern. They call this *tcibəlɔwe'swi· nəbi·'zun*, "fits medicine", the steeped plants being regarded as highly valuable for curing fits. This plant is said also to be one of the motives in the characteristic curved decorative designs of Malecite art.

The Malecite also think that to blow tobacco smoke in the ear of the sufferer will cure earache.

Yellow ash (*Fraxinus americana*), *wi·'kəbi·*, "splint (wood)"; leaves, in a very strong, bitter decoction, are given to women after childbirth to cleanse them.

White oak (*Quercus alba*), *anaskə'məzi;* bark is steeped and drunk for bleeding piles.

Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*); leaves, dried and powdered, are smoked for asthma. Another plant, similar to this, was described as valuable for the same purpose.

Black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), *wekwomu'zi*, "black cherry tree"; bark is steeped and drunk for a cough, and the berries, steeped, made a fine bitter tonic.

Sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), *ba'gəlus;* root dried and crushed to powder, and sweet flag, are steeped together for coughs.

High-bush cranberries (*Viburnum opulus*), *i·bi·'mi·nal*, "flat seed berries", are steeped and drunk for swollen glands and mumps. (Also a Malecite remedy.)

Chokeberry (*Prunus virginiana*), *adəbi·'mi·nuzi*, "bitter berry wood"; bark is steeped and drunk for diarrhea.

Moose wood (*Acer pennsylvanicum*), *adoki·'mus*, "deer wood";[1] bark is steeped and made into a poultice for swelling of the limbs.

Snake-root (*Aristolchia serpentaria*) is steeped for fits.

Pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*), *wi·'pula'ksəns*, "whippoorwill's moccasins", is steeped and drunk for spitting up blood, and supposedly for kidney trouble. (Also a Malecite remedy.)

Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisæma triphyllum*), *bukdji'nskwes·wi· a'wɑs·i·s*, "Jug Woman's baby",[2] is steeped to make a liniment for general external use. The liquid is also a poison.

To increase fertility the women formerly (if they do not now) steeped a piece of ginseng root (*Panax quinquefolium*), called "man root",[3] shaped like a pair of legs with the membrum. The root was steeped in water and drunk from time to time.

Several of the roots of worm-root (*Apocynum cannabium*), *pske'ta'guk'*, "ramified", are steeped in water and administered to expel worms.

Cohosh root (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) is a common medicine for kidney trouble it seems, or, as they describe it, "feeling all played out." Two or three small

[1] The word *at·i·k* (*adok-*) for "deer" does not occur in Penobscot.

[2] A mythical female creature of the deep woods.

[3] It is remarkable that this designation should be almost universal.

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pieces of root are enough for a quart of medicine, which is drunk two or three times a day in quantities of about half a pint. At times they drink a good deal of this, which is rather pleasant to taste.

Elm (*Ulmus americana*), *a'ni·bi·*;[1] bark steeped and drunk is a cure for bleeding at the lungs. This trouble was formerly common among these Indians, but for the last twenty-five years it is almost unknown. The bleeding would start in suddenly after some exertion and sometimes become very copious. Could elm-bark tea be obtained, they say, relief would be assured.

One of the numerous functions of the Penobscot panacea, sweet flag, or muskrat root (*Iris versicolor*), is to keep away disease in general by being steamed through the house. It is thought to "kill" sickness. Also while traveling, when disease is likely to attack a person he may keep it away by chewing a piece of the root.

Bits of blood-root (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), *paga'kani·la'səgil*, "bleeds", dried and strung together into a necklace, were worn to prevent bleeding. This is evidently related to the red bead necklace to be spoken of shortly.

The following concoction was obtained in confidence from an old Indian healer who claimed to have used it effectively a number of times. The cure is for gonorrhea primarily, although he used it for kidney trouble and for spitting up blood, but he could not explain how the two were connected. The ingredients are: Wintergreen (*Pyrola uliginosa*), *ke'gogaba'kil;* "Black root" (*Baptisia tinctoria*), *me'kaza'utak;* Cleavers vines (*Galium aperine*), *kli·'vas* (English); Spikenard root (*Aralia racemosa*), *a'ləmi·mi·'zi*, "underneath root"; Solomon's seal (*Streptopus amplexifolius*), *naha'mui·'min*, "eel berry"; Moose wood (*Acer pennsylvanicum*), *adoki·'mus*, "deer wood"; Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), *soba'kwozikwi·'bi*, "pierced leaves". A small quantity of each is steeped in water and about half a cupful drunk three times a day in a quart of water. It is further claimed to be an excellent tonic by the possessor, who called it *tci·ga'swe nəbi·'zun*, "gonorrhea medicine".[2] As a test for detecting the disease, the Penobscot men employ tobacco on the finger.

Several more elaborate cures are as follows: Lambkill (*Kalmia angustifolia*), *sa'bugo;* cedar bark (*Arbor vitæ*), *kaŋkska'teguk*, "brittle boughs"; and salt, *sa'lawe*, used to be pounded together and made into a poultice. A specimen poultice obtained was put up in a small birch-bark cup. By means of a scratching instrument scars were cut into the skin directly over the part affected with pain and the poultice smeared over and rubbed in. This was a nostrum used in olden times for all kinds of trouble. Inquiry regarding the scratching instruments disclosed four different kinds remembered by those who had seen them used. One consisted of several pieces of flint or chert arrowhead chips found about old camp-sites, or actual arrowheads. I presume that some superstition was associated with these relics. The others, more special in nature, were bundles of from five to seven sharpened goosequills or hardwood sticks, about three inches long, tied together with a basket splint. A basket gauge was also said to have been employed occasionally as a scratcher. The idea of scratching the skin for the application of medicine in this northern region (the Algonquins of Ontario,

[1] Malecite, *tcəsagənik'*, "awl wood".

[2] The White Mountain Apache have at least six distinct vegetal remedies for gonorrhea. Hrdlička, p. 231.

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Montagnais, Penobscot, Malecite) reminds one of the more elaborate ceremonial scarification practices among the southern Atlantic tribes.[1]

The sweat-bath (Penobscot *apse'swągan* "sweating", Malecite *agwudnamagən*, "inclosure", practised among the Penobscot presents some distinctive features. A concoction of seven herbs is taken as a sudorific before entering the sudatory. It comprises sweet-flag, fir-twigs, lambkill, alder-bark, witch-hazel twigs, cedar-boughs, prince's pine, and a kind of brake. With some individuals the components were found to vary a little. One, for instance, had several dried partridge crops containing cedar-buds, which, I suppose, he thought would be more powerful. The patient seats himself, usually indoors (in former times in a specially constructed bark hut), over a vessel of water into which heated stones have been dropped by an assistant, and a blanket is put over him, reaching to the floor all round. With the draft in his stomach and the heat confined under the blanket, a profuse sweat is soon induced; after a short period the patient goes to bed in his blankets and sleeps. This they do to break up fever, *abzuwąga'ni*, "heated blood".

Other than plants, there are the following medicinal agents of various sorts, some of which partake largely of the nature of amulets.

Beaver castor (testicles) is a panacea for all kinds of female troubles. For such use it is steeped and often mixed with brandy. In cases of measles the Indians used to fix a half-dried castor on the end of a needle and stick it up each nostril to relieve the congestion and inflammation. Merely to carry beaver castor about with one is beneficial, they think. It is also largely used by men as a lure scent for their traps. Others put a little scraped castor into nearly every medicine brew to add to its efficacy.

A string of red glass beads, long enough to pass round the neck several times, was worn formerly by women who could procure them, to prevent excessive bleeding at all times. They thought these red beads would also keep their blood rich and pure. As such necklaces were never removed from their wearers, many having been buried, there are few now to obtain. One or two old women still have a string which they wear concealed.

A toad split open and put over a rheumatic pain was thought to expel the trouble.

As a cure and also as a preventive of cramps and rheumatism an eelskin is worn next to the skin. For pains in the back or stomach the skin is worn under the belt; for trouble in the limbs it is tied about the seat of the ailment.

For headache I heard of three different nostrums, and was told that there are others. An eelskin is bound around the head; or a frog is caught and buried alive, the headache being thought to be buried with it; or a dried snake's tongue is carried about. The last named is also considered a charm against toothache.

To remove warts, several pieces of raw meat are rubbed over them and then buried with the idea of transferring them to the earth.

The women believe in tying a light bandage around their own and the infant's abdomen immediately after childbirth, as they say it facilitates healing and prevents excessive bleeding.

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[1] Cf. Mooney, Cherokee, p. 334; Speck, Yuchi, p. 121; also Hrdlička, Southwestern area, p. 237. Scarification with glass or sharp stones seems to be very widespread in America.

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To relieve hiccough the sufferer's mind must be distracted by a sudden question which will engage his attention.

"Besides the medicine prepared by the old women to heal the sick, there was found . . . just previous to the coming of the white man, a natural medicinal water in the vicinity of *Ka·'skok*, 'heron place' [Casco, Me.], which was found to contain very powerful healing powers, the effects of which were much the same as the medicines prepared by the healers. . . . The spot was visited by all the people from all parts of the country and they continued their visits until after the white man came. According to the old traditional story tellers, this water boils out of the earth in a country of rocks a short walk from the shores of *Ka·'skok* in the direction of the setting sun. This medicine water was called *ktci'tkạbi.*" [1]

MONTAGNAIS MEDICINE PRACTICES

Living in a still less profuse floral zone, the Montagnais, of the shores of the lower river and the gulf of St Lawrence, employ what remedies their habitat furnishes in about the same manner as the tribes of the Wabanaki group south of the St Lawrence. Consequently the remarks on general practice introducing the Penobscot remedies can be applied here.

The following list of plants, with their native names, the analysis where this is possible, and the names of the ailments, present the result of my inquiries among the women of the Tadousac and Escoumains bands. These bands, living at the southernmost range of the Montagnais, are chosen to be represented because their region is richer in vegetation than that of their relatives farther north. Usage does not seem to differ much in the neighboring bands, but a few differences in the names occur owing to change in dialect as one passes into the interior.

The remedies are known as *ntəɣwə'ln*, and sickness is *nta'uqʷcən* in the coast dialect.

The berries of the mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*), *maskə'man*, "bear berries", so called because they are a favorite food of bears, are good for people to eat. The bark of the tree is boiled and the decoction drunk to stimulate the appetite and to purify the blood.

The leaves of several species of lady's slipper (*Habenaria orbiculata* and *H. Hookeri* (?), *koskətabu'q*, are put upon the hands or feet to cure them of blisters, *omtsi·'win* (*omtsi·'u*, "pimple").

The leaves and twigs of Labrador tea (*Ledum Grœnlandicum*), *mi·ləwebu'q*,[2] "fuzzy powdered leaves", are steeped and drunk to purify the blood and taken in case of chill, *ci·ɣətso'*.

The berries of the creeper partridge-berry (*Mitchella repens*), *wi·'jətsəminkəci·**, "berry-bearing branches", are cooked into a jelly and used for fever, *ntcə'jən*.

The inner bark of the canoe birch (*Betula papyrifera*), *ockwi·'*, and balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), *ilnastu'q*, is grated and eaten as beneficial to diet at times.[3]

A small running plant (*Hudsonia tomentosa*), "ground berry", is boiled, and the liquid is drunk by women to purge their blood.

[1] Nicolar, p. 147.

[2] In the Lake St John dialect, *ami'skʷtogi·**, "beaver ears".

[3] This practice is widespread among the northern Algonquians, and is the basis of the name *Ratirǫ'taks*, "they eat bark" ("Adirondacks"), applied to the Algonquins of Ottawa river by the Mohawk.

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Pain in the body is treated with a mash made of the fronds of Christmas fern, *ulaγən məskoco'*, "pot herb (grass)", which are soaked in cold water and pounded.

A mash made of the plant of *Linnæa borealis americana* (*ble'mci·c*, "partridge food") will cure inflammation of the limbs, *patso'*.

The plant of *Gnaphalium popycephalum*, or *Anaphalis margaritacea* (*wa'bəγwun*, "white flower"), furnishes a decoction for coughing and consumption, *oscqa'tsəγən*, "stomach sickness".

A tea made of wild lily-of-the-valley (*Maianthemum canadense*), *noquətsa'cəmən*, "squirrel berry", is drunk for headache, *nta'uqʷcən nstoqwa'n*, "pain in head".

The plant of "four seasons" (*Monensis uniflora*), *cacaγumna'n*, "four seasons", is steeped to make a medicine for paralysis, *osəpətəγo'*, "hauling".

For sickness in general the berries and stems of Solomon's seal (*Streptopus amplexifolius*), *mantocəmi·'n*, "snake berry", are steeped and taken. Snakes are thought to eat the berries and roots of this plant, hence its name.

The blossoms of *Streptopus roseus* (*katsəcwaγə'nt*, "for warming up") are steeped to make medicine to produce a sweat, *apwe'qcwaγə'nt*, "sweat warming", or *pwejo'*, "sweat".

"Peppermint leaf", *pabəlmani·bi·'c* (*pabelma*, from the French), is steeped for headache medicine.

Fir-twigs, *saba'wan*, are soaked in hot water, made into a mash, and put on the skin to draw out inflammation in a case of "pain", *cece'γojo*.

The twigs of black spruce (*Picea mariana*), *mini'kʷ*, are boiled to make a broth that is good for a cough, *ostəstə'q*.

For generally beneficial effects the twigs of white spruce (*Picea canadensis*), *ceqatu'q*, are steeped for a beverage.

The leaves of pitcher plants (*Sarracenia purpurea*), *tama'li· ota'c*, "Virgin Mary's sock", are steeped for medicine for smallpox, *omtsi·'win*, "pimple sickness".

The leaves and stems of meadow beauty (*Rhexia virginica*), *pi'neγəl məstu'qʷ*, "vinegar wood", are made into a brew for cleansing the throat and for a sour drink in general.

The leaves of wintergreen (*Pyrola uliginosa*), *macqʷtogi·'*, "bear's ear", are boiled in water and drunk for any kind of ailment.

The plant of the thistle (*Circium arvense*), *kaka'was*, is boiled for consumption.

The leaves of sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*), *wi·cətsəbu'q*, "bitter flower (powder)", are known for their poisonous properties. A very small quantity is steeped and drunk for colds and backache. This is so strong that they say "it runs through the whole body".

St John's wort (*Hypericium perforatum*), *wi·caucuγi·au' məstu'qʷ*, "golden wood", is boiled to make a cough medicine.

Milkwort (*Polygala polygamma*), *i·dəməlna'n wabuγwu'n*, "blue-berry flower", is also boiled for cough medicine.

For general sickness, and incidentally for consumption, star anemone (*Trientalis americana*), *otseqətuq*, "little light star", also *otemənа'n kəci·*, "heart berry plant", is steeped.

Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), *amə'ckʷ ockətəmwi·'*, "beaver his food", has general medicinal properties.

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The blue flag (*Iris versicolor*), *ula'γənskuco'*, "pot-herb", is crushed and mixed with flour to be made into a poultice to be placed on any sort of pain.

For illness in general, again, a brew is made of pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*), *saki''γənəm məskoco'*, "lake herb".

Ground hemlock (*Taxus minor*, and *Lycopodium*, including *L. clavatum*) of different sorts, known collectively as *kabəpa'mepeqste's*, "runner", is used as a brew for weakness and fever.

Buttercup leaves (*Ranunculus acris*), *buta'd* (French "moutarde"), are crushed and inhaled from the hands to relieve headache.

The plant of bunch-berry (*Cornus canadensis*), *cacaγumna'n*, "four seasons", is steeped for paralysis.

The vines of *Lonicera canadensis* (*kawaba'ts məstuq*^{w}, "white wood") are steeped for urinary trouble. As an example of efficiency, a boy at Tadousac whose abdomen was distended with retained water, was relieved in twenty minutes after taking this medicine.

The fronds of brake (*Pteris aquilina*) are made into a bed in the camp in order to strengthen babies' backs and old people.

The twigs of cedar (*Arbor vitæ*), *məsi''ck'*, are bruised and steeped to make a sweat drink.

The bark of red willow (*Salix lucida*), *məγwa''bemuq*, "red wood", is scraped and steeped to make a mash to be put in a bandage on the head for headache. The leaves are also steeped and drunk. The bark is dried and smoked as a substitute for tobacco by the Montagnais, as well as by the other northern tribes.

The bark of the poplar (*Populus tremuloides*), *mi't'ə'c*, scraped, dried, and kept until needed, is steeped and given to children suffering with worms, *momanto'cəmo*, "worm resembling". Too much of it, however, is considered dangerous.

Twigs of alder[1] (*Alnus* sp.), *tocpi''*, are boiled and drunk for impure blood, *omu'q abuməlowa'ts*, "blood impure".

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) (European), *məcle'o mi''tsəm*, "turkey food", is steeped for fever medicine.

Of somewhat uncertain identity to the informant, Pyrola (*Pyrola elliptica*) roots are boiled and drunk for weakness, *otələγwa'γən ntauq*^{w}*cən*, "back sickness".

Meadow rue (*Thalictrium polygamum*), *cpapwani'bi''c*, "leaves to put in with wood", is cut up into pieces and these are tied to salmon when it is being cooked to add to its flavor.

Sarsaparilla (*Aralia medicalis*), *wabu'cəγəci'*, "rabbit roots", are steeped in cases of weakness, *abocabci''t*. The dark berries are made into a kind of wine by the Montagnais and used as a tonic. Rabbits are said to be very fond of the roots, whence the name. The women cut up pieces of the root, tie them on a string, and keep them in their tents until needed.[2] The berries are put in cold water and allowed to ferment in making the wine referred to.

The gum of white pine (*Pinus strobus*), *oləwe'yaju'q*, "rich wood", is boiled and drunk for sore-throat, colds, and consumption.

The bark of red spruce (*Picea rubens*), *wasəna'γən*, "binder",[3] is boiled with roots of sour grass and the liquid drunk for lung and throat trouble.

[1] Among the Lake St John Montagnais, alder bark is used as a brew in small quantities for fever.

[2] The same is done by the Penobscot.

[3] So-called from being employed in canoe-making.

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Leaves of fern (sp. ?), *tsəɣa'cəbu'q'*, "weasel plant", are boiled and drunk for stomach-ache, *cqa'tsəɣən*, "sick stomach".

Ground pine (*Lycopodium dendroideum;* native name unobtainable) is boiled and drunk as a purgative in case of biliousness, *qawi·ɣawa'ts*, "yellowness". This is said to be very effective.

Cranberry branches (*Oxycoccus macrocarpus*), *məseɣumna'n*, "swamp berries", are steeped as a medicine for pleurisy.

The high-bush cranberry plant (*Viburnum opulus*), *moco'mən*, "moose berry", is boiled and the mess rubbed in the eyes for sore eyes, *ntauq^{w}cən losi·'saq*, "sickness of the eyes".

Prince's pine (*Chimaphila umbellata*), *ci·ci·pmə'n*, "duck berry", is boiled and drunk to induce sweating.

Teeth of the beaver are kept by hunters to be charred in the fire, pounded into powder, and put in water to be drunk for sickness in general.

At Lake St John the Montagnais employ the tail of an otter for curing earache and also for gall or swelling on the hands. They scorch the tail in the fire and place it on the affected part, mixed with fat from the otter's tail.

Medicine Practices of the Micmac-Montagnais of Newfoundland

From the mixed Micmac and Montagnais who form the native population of Newfoundland, I have a few notes to present.[1]

The roots of the pitcher plant (*Sarracena purpurea*), which is very common in the barrens of Newfoundland, are steeped and the liquid is drunk for sore throat. The plant is locally called *tma·'ɣan*, "pipe", because the hollow leaf bowl is occasionally used as a makeshift pipe by the Indians.

The leaves of Labrador tea (*Ledum Grœnlandicum*) are steeped to make a tea which has a beneficial effect on the system. It is the common native beverage.

Sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*) is known to be very poisonous. A poultice is made of the crushed leaves and bound upon the head to cure headache over night. As a non-specific remedy a small dose, not more than a spoonful, of tea made from a few leaves is considered valuable.

Sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*), *ki·we'swask'*, "muskrat root", is employed as a panacea, as among the Penobscot.

Cartwright, in the early part of the last century, obtained a list from the same people.[2]

Plant	Part Used	Preparation	How Administered	Disease
Geum nivale, or chocolate root	Root	Strong decoction	Drank, a gill two or three times a day or oftener	Dysentery, colds and coughs, particularly for children
Sarracenia purpurea or Indian cup	Root	Strong decoction	A table or teaspoonful drank frequently during the day, with abstinence for several days	Spitting blood and other pulmonary complaints

[1] Micmac, *mpi·'zun*, "medicine", is cognate with Penobscot *nəbi·'zun*.

[2] J. P. Howley, The Beothucks or Red Indians, the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland. Cambridge University Press, 1915, pp. 153-54.

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PLANT	PART USED	PREPARATION	HOW ADMINISTERED	DISEASE
Havernaria dilatata	Root	Expressed juice	Drank, a gill at a time with a little water	Gravel
Smilacrina borealis	Root	Expressed juice	Drank, a gill at a time	Gravel
Sorbus Americana	Root	Infusion	Drank	Colic
Nymphæa odorata	Root	Expressed juice	Drank	Coughs
Nymphæa odorata	Root	Boiled	Poultice	Swellings
Nuphar advena	Root	Bruised with flour or meal		Swellings and bruises
Mergantnes trifolia	Root	Very strong decoction	Drank	
Salix (vulgare)	Root	Scrape into spirits	Poultice	Bruises, sprains, and broken bones
Kalmia angustifolia	Leaves	Hot water with infusion — very poison, if strong	Drank	Stomach complaints
Pinus balsamea, P. *Strobus* Young, and *P. microcarpa*	Inner bark	Boiled		Sores, swellings, etc.
Cornus stricta	Bark	Dried	Mixed with tobacco for smoking	
Taxus Canadensis	Leaves	Very strong concentrated decoction	As a green dye	
Salix (vulgare)	Root		As a black dye	
Salix (vulgare)	Leaves	Bruised with hot water		Sprains and bruises
Vaccinium hispidotum	Leaves or the plant	Decoction	As a tea	
Ledum latifolium	Leaves	Decoction	As a tea	Diuretic
Pinus microcarpa	Boughs	Decoction	As a tea	Diuretic
Sorbus Americana	Bark	Infusion	As a tea	

The lixivium from the ashes of deers' bones is drunk as an astringent. The yolk of eggs and turpentine, equal parts, or vary the proportion with the nature of the sore, applied as a salve, is said to have effected cures in desperate cases of ulcers.

MOHEGAN MEDICINAL PRACTICES

Representing the southern New England group, we have a list of pharmacopeia from the Mohegan of Thames river, eastern Connecticut.[1]

The administration of the remedies here is the same in general as among the other eastern Algonquians. The practitioners were mostly old women, although sorcerors (*moigu''wag*) employed herb cures in addition to their magical practices. Several magic plants are mentioned in Mohegan folklore as having been used by former witches. One is "whistling root", a mysterious plant, known to some of the shamans, which endowed the finder with supernatural power. When placed

[1] This material is furnished by Miss G. I. Tantaquidgeon, who has given much attention to the folklore surviving in her tribe. Plants introduced from Europe are so indicated in parentheses.

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upon a rock it is said that the root would whistle and vanish. Other weeds are spoken of which were so potent in the hands of a magician that even the sight of them would frighten away the most savage dogs.

The remedies are termed *a'mbask* (derivation of *'ambi*, "liquid"). There is a taboo against gathering them for medicine until after dog-days.

Blood-root (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) is steeped and used as a blood medicine, and it is also regarded as an emetic.

Ripe wild cherries (*Prunus serotina*) are put into a bottle and allowed to ferment as they are, in their own juice, for about a year, when they are thought to become an excellent remedy for dysentery. Wild-cherry leaves and boneset steeped together make a tea beneficial for colds, "to be drunk hot at night, cold at morn."

White pine (*Pinus strobus*) bark is steeped and drunk cold to cure a cold.

Leaves of the wild grape (*Vitus labrusca*) are bound directly to the head for headache. "In a few hours they are completely dried and crackled by the fever which they absorb."

"May weed" (*Anthemis cotula*) (European) are steeped and the liquid drunk cold for fever.

Sweet fern (*Myrica asplenifolia*) leaves are steeped and the liquid rubbed on the skin to cure the toxic effect of poison ivy.

"Canker lettuce", shin leaf (*Pyrola elliptica*), is steeped and the liquid used as a gargle for sores or cankers in the mouth.

Tobacco smoke blown in the ear will stop earache.

Wild mustard (*Brassica nigra*) leaves are bound on the skin to relieve toothache or headache.

The leaves of rattlesnake plantain (*Epipactis pubescens*) are made into a mash to prevent sore mouth in babies.

Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*) tea, as in most parts of the east, is drunk for many ailments, colds, fever, and general illness.

Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*) (European) is steeped to make a tea to be drunk by women for some of their peculiar ills.

"Elder blow", flowers of the elder (*Sambucus canadensis*), is made into tea to be given to babies for colic.

The bark of the elder made into a tea is an excellent purgative; when scraped upward from the branch it acts as an emetic, when scraped off downward it is a physic.

Spikenard (*Smilacina racemosa*) leaves are steeped to make a cough medicine. The root is steeped for a medicine to strengthen the stomach.

Pipsisseway (*Chimaphila umbellata*) is steeped and applied to blisters.

"Fire bush" (*Evonymus atropurpurea*), *wɔ'hu* (*wahoo*), is made into a tea to be used as a physic.

Running blackberry (*Rubus hispidus*) berries are steeped and drunk as a vermifuge.

Wart weed (sp. ?) exudes a whitish juice which if applied to warts will cure them.

Pennyroyal (*Hedeoma pulegioides*) is made into a tea and drunk to warm the stomach.

Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) made into a tea is good as a worm medicine.

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Golden thread (*Coptis trifolia*) is steeped for use as a mouth wash for babies.

"Peppergrass" (*Bursa bursa pastoris*) seed-pods are made into tea for the general benefit of the stomach. Its pungency is thought to kill internal worms.

Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) (European) tea is given to babies for worms, and grown people drink it.

Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) (European) leaves are smoked for asthma and sore throat.

Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) leaves are made into a tea to cure whooping-cough.

Leaves of spicewood (*Benzoin benzoin*) are chewed, or steeped to make a tea, to cure children of worms.

"Indian posy" (*Gnaphalium margaritacea*) is steeped and drunk for colds.

Twigs of "speckled alder" are steeped and used for bathing purposes, for sprains, bruises, headache, and backache.

The berries of "upland sumach" make a gargle for sore throat. They are also made into a beverage.

White oak (*Quercus alba*) bark is steeped and used as liniment; it is used also for horses.

Wild rhubarb leaves are steeped to make a nerve medicine.

Spider-webs and puff-balls are used to stop bleeding.

The marrow of an animal's jaw-bone is used to draw out splinters and to allay inflammation.

Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) (European) and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) are soaked together in cold water and taken as an appetizer and for the stomach.

Wild indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*) root is steeped and used to bathe cuts and wounds.

"Indian tea" (*Aster umbellatus*) is steeped from dried leaves and used as a beverage.

Elecampane (*Inula helenicum*) (European) is steeped for lung medicine, and also given to horses for colic.

Leaves of hardhack (*Spiræa tomentosa*) are steeped to make medicine for dysentery.

Leaves of horseradish (*Roripa amorica*) (European) are prepared by removing the midrib, the rest is then bound upon the cheeks for toothache.

Common plantain (*Plantago major*) leaves are bound over stings, burns, bruises, and snake-bites to draw out the poison.

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*) (European) tea is given to babies for colic.

Burdock (*Arctium minus*) (European), boneset, and motherwort are combined into a tea used for colds in the winter time.

Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) are used in making nerve medicine. Only the blossoms are used. This brew is very "quieting". A little bag of dried blossoms, heated, is applied in case of toothache or earache.

Elm (*Ulmus americana*) bark is steeped to make cough and cold medicine.

The root of blueweed (*Echium vulgare*) (European) is steeped for kidney medicine.

Snake-root (*Aristolchia serpentaria*) is pounded into a mash and applied to snake-bites.

Dandelion plant (*Taraxacum officinale*) is steeped for a physic.

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A spring tonic is made by steeping together the following: Wild-cherry bark (*Prunus serotina*), sassafras root (*Sassafras sassafras*), sarsaparilla root (*Aralia nudicaulis*), sweet-flag root (*Acorus calamus*), ginseng root (*Panax quinquefolium*), burdock leaves, spikenard root (*Smilacina racemosa*), dandelion plant, and blossoms of the white daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), boneset, motherwort, and black birch (*Betula lenta*) bark.

For cases of fever caused by taking cold in the winter, the heart of onion roasted in the coals of a fire, is used. The heart is bound on the wrist, hollow of the foot, and sometimes on the chest and back in severe cases. It is thought to "draw out" the trouble and reduce congestion. A piece of the same inserted in the ear will cure earache.

Some other interesting empirical cures not employing herbs, are as follows.

To catch a blacksnake (*Bascanium constrictor*) alive and bite on him from head to tail will cure toothache and prevent recurrence.[1]

Fresh cow-dung bound upon the face will cure a toothache.

A blacksnake-skin worn round the waist next the skin will cure rheumatism.

To relieve chapped lips, rub the finger behind the ear, then over the lips.

Wax from the ear if applied to insect stings will allay the irritation.

To cure hiccough, think of a gray horse.

Skunk-oil, or goose-grease, obtained by simply melting the fat, is taken internally for colds.

The fumes of a piece of leather scorched in the fire will help colds.

Medicine Practice of the Nanticoke of Delaware

From the decendants of the Nanticoke of Delaware we have the following herb remedies, given in résumé, which I obtained some years ago while making a study of the community [2] known in the region as the Nanticoke or "Moor" tribe. These simples are interesting, as they may possibly be survivals of southern Algonquian herbology.

Hepatica (*Hepatica triloba*). Fever and chills.
Horse-mint (*Cunila origanoides*). Colds.
Calamus (*Acorus calamus*). Colic.
Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*). Poultice for inflammation.
Wild indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*). Sprains.
Poplar (*Populus deltoidea*). Sprains.
Pine (tar) (*Pinus echinata*). Cathartic.
Prickly-pear (*Opuntia opuntia*). Warts, frost bite.
Skunk cabbage (*Spathyema fœtida*). Colds.
Sassafras (*Sassafras sassafras*). Fever and ague.
"Fish weeds" (species ?). Worms.
Pipsisseway (*Chimaphila maculata*). Ague.
"King oil weed" (species ?). Poultices.
Snake-root (*Aristolchia serpentaria*). Worms.
Balsam plant (*Impatiens biflora*). Burns.

[1] Also a common Iroquois belief, substituting the green snake (*Liopeltis vernalis*) for the blacksnake.

[2] F. G. Speck, The Nanticoke Community of Delaware, *Contributions from the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation*, vol. II, no. 4, 1915.

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Arrowroot (*Peltandra undulata*). Baby food.
Burdock (*Arctium minus*). Boils.
Pennyroyal (*Hedeoma pulegioides*). Sudorific.
Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*). Sudorific.
Myrtle (*Leiophyllum vuxifolium*). Tonic.
Wild thyme (*Thymus serphyllum*). Chills and fever.
Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*). Chills and fever.

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